C O P Y

The Constitution, Atlanta, Ga., Sunday, July 30, 1893.

J. WILKES BOOTH

The story of his alleged escape recalled by a lecture

A MAN WHO SAW HIM DIE

Tells of his last hours and explains the circumstances

SAM SMALL CONTRIBUTES A CHAPTER

To the history of the case, giving valuable and interesting information-- A strange story fully reviewed.

Yoakum, Tex., July 29, - (Special Correspondence.)- It may be that Eve didn't really eat an apple in the garden of Eden, that William Tell didn't shoot another apple off the head of his hopeful, that George Washington didn't hack the cherry tree with his little hatchet and make that incomprehensible declaration about his veracity, but nevertheless, the world will go on believing those romantic stories. They illustrate many things, but nothing more than the irrepressible vitality of pleasing myths.

More Modern Instances.

I have been meditating this peculiar instance of marvelous fiction because of some recent things that have come to my notice.

Take that constantly recurring story about the escape of Ney and his subsequent long residence incognito in North Carolina. The story has been told so often in the papers, with such details of evidence, as to make hosts of readers feel sure that the doomed, marshall never got himself shot at all in heroic form, but made a lucky escape to America to die comfortably as an humble and free citizen of the great republic.

Then, more interesting and modern still, comes the John Wilkes Booth case. A score of plausible stories of the escape of Booth from capture and death have been printed, with wealth of circumstantiality to support them, and thousands of people may be found all over the south who will never believe that Booth perished in the Garrett barn.

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You will doubtless remember the sensation caused some years ago by the claim that Rev. Mr. Armstrong, the rector of an Episcopal church in Charleston, S.C., was Booth in disguise. The reverend gentleman was much annoyed by the curious public and was finally compelled to show by his family history that there was no mystery whatever in his life.

Any one who has taken the pains to read the history on the subject can answer the question for himself, but for those who have not I will state the following facts:

1. John Wilkes Booth was one of the most strikingly handsome men I have ever seen. No one who ever looked upon his face could ever forget it or mistake any one else for him. He was, also, from his profession, known all over the land. His pictures were exhibited in every city of any consequence. Many of the men pursuing him were personally acquainted with him, perhaps not one but who would have known him on sight.

2. There is not a missing link in the chain stretching from the theatre in Washington, where he fired the fatal shot, to the barn on my father's farm, where he died. Traced, step by step, from the door where he moubted his horse to the house of Dr. Mudd, where he had his broken leg set. (Dr. Mudd never denied what he did, and for his professional services was banished to the Dry Tortugas.) From Dr. Mudd's house, on the shores of the Potomac, the ferryman who ferried Booth and Herold across the river at midnight, was found and he never denied what he did. The farmer who took them in his wagon from the south bank of the Potomac to the Rappahannock came forward to tell his story and is well known. The ferryman who bore them over the latter river is still alive. The men to whom Booth and Herold revealed their identity on the river bank were reliable men.

Then, was it likely that in these days of horror and of dread that anybody else should claim to be the men on whose heads a price was set? The men who knew Booth horrified at finding him on their hands, knowing as they did of the proclamation

condemning to death without trial any one found harboring or assisting the fleeing conspirators, took the very first opportunity to rid themselves of their unwelcome burden, and introduced them to my father as wounded confederate soldiers returning from Appomattox. So you see, not one link in the chain of evidence is missing.

3. The dying man's words acknowledged his act: "Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best to do." Again, referring to the burning barn, "Captain, it is hard that this family should suffer for what I have done. They don't know who I am".

4. The identification of the dead man's body was complete. Standing by I saw it done. First, the picture of the young actor, so well known everywhere, was laid by the dead man's face. God never made two men so exactly alike. Then point by point the printed description, held in the hand of the detective, was verified. The height, color of hair, eyes, all exact, every scar and mark. Then the crowning evidence, on the arm of the dead man was his name in India ink, done long years before.

Why the secrecy in regard to the body? Well, if you had lived near Washington during those troublous times and had known something of the wild rage of the people, this would be answer enough. Two other reasons suggest themselves to me. One, a petty spite which refused to give the assassin decent burial; the other, not so generally known, was, the body had been shamefully mutilated. The brain had been taken out and part of the backbone removed. These can still be seen on exhibition in the medical museum in Washington. The body two years afterwards was given up to the family by President Johnson and now sleeps in the family lot in Greenmount, Baltimore. I have stood by the grave and read all it bears- the name.

6. If Booth is still alive his family is not aware of his existence, and his old mother lived for twenty years never even naming the name of her dead boy. She died still grieving for his mad deed and his untimely end. I have positive proof in the shape of letters from Edwin Booth and other members of the family to prove that they knew that the man who died at my father's house April 26, 1865, was their brother

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and son. The family never sympathized with his act, and while they loved and mourned the dead, they looked with horror on the mad act that wroght so much ill to them.

And now your request is complied with. No shadow of doubt rests in the minds of those who were familiar with the facts as to the fate of the slayer of Abraham Lincoln. I suppose these stories will be told for years to come, and like the stories of the lost Dauphin of France, half a century hence men will claim that somewhere the gifted young actor, who wrecked his own life and plunged a nation into trouble and woe by his own mad deed, is still living in a green old age.

R. B. GARRETT.

The statement of Dr. Garrett and the opinion of Colonel Smith are quite conflicting and the public is at liberty to judge which is correct.

WILL T. HAWKINS.

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Described in a Lecture.

And, again, last Monday evening, before a great audience at the Georgetown, Tex., chautauqua, Dr. Garrett in a simple, direct manner told the story with very livid coloring of the hostoric affair as it occurred before his eyes, and none who heard him carried away a lingering doubt that the man whom Boston Corbett shot in the Garrett burning barn was John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

Corbett, by the way, afterwards became doorkeeper, I believe, of one of the houses of the legislature of Kansas, developed a violent case of insanity, and is now confined in one of the lunatic asylums of that state.

Andrew Johnson's Proofs.

While I was associated with ex-President Andrew Johnson, at Greenville, in 1872-3, he was a candidate for nomination by the democratic party for congressman for the state at large. In order to help defeat him, that stormy petrel of all sorts of politics, ex-Governor Henry S. Foote, formerly of Mississippi, but then

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order that was at once issued and the remains of Mrs. Surratt were delivered to the order of the daughter.

It is significant that Miss Surratt made the request of Mr. Johnson, because, as she stated, she feared that General Grant, when he should become president, would not accede to her request.

The letter of Miss Surratt is also in the possession of Mr. Brown. Both the letter of Mr. Booth and Miss Surratt are autograph letters.

So, I think, the world may easily suspend further speculation as to the fate of J. Wilkes Booth. He was killed on the Garrett farm and his body rests in Greenmount Cemetery, Baltimore.

S. W. S.